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Youth Volunteerism Engagement: Are They Ready?

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Abstract

Volunteerism plays a crucial role in encouraging young people to become active citizens and key agents of positive change within their communities. However, youth often face challenges such as unemployment, social marginalization, exclusion, and limited access to training and opportunities. This paper examines the factors that promote youth engagement in volunteerism. A total of 373 university students participated in the study, and the findings, using PLS-SEM (Partial least squares structural equation modelling), indicate that accessibility, altruism, and utilitarianism positively influence youth volunteerism. Altruism emerged as the most significant motivational factor. This study enhances our understanding of youth engagement in volunteerism and offers valuable insights for educational institutions, government, and non-government organizations to develop effective strategies to promote and support youth volunteerism.

Keywords: Youth Volunteerism, Altruistic, Utilitarianism, Social Motive, Accessibility, Engagement.

Introduction

In this age of globalisation and technological innovation, young people are key agents for social change and are providing the energy, creative ideas, and determination to drive innovation and reform (Quiroz-Martinez et al., 2005; UN World Youth Report, 2003). They represent promise and potential for generation hope to contribute to a happy, healthy, and prosperous future. However, this could be dashed by widespread joblessness, unequal access to health and education, and lack of political influence. Youth unemployment and mismatch between youth skills and employer needs threaten to become even wider as Industry 4.0 transforms business and jobs faster than workers can adapt. Social marginalisation and exclusion, lack of access to training, and opportunities are other challenges, which pose a risk to the constructive channelling of the creative energies that youth represent.

Hence, how to sustainably promote and nurture youth engagement? Youth volunteerism, with the underpinning value of reciprocity, responsibility, and engagement is an important delivery mechanism for social, environmental, and economic transformation to change people's mindsets, attitudes, and behaviours. It elicits a sense of responsibility towards others, giving

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young people a feeling of self-worth and belonging to their communities. It also complements formal education in teaching the skills that are required for the job market, such as leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, planning, management, creativity, communication, and negotiation.

Furthermore, the 2014-2017 Strategic Framework of United Nation emphasised youth and channels effort towards the UN Youth Volunteers Programme to empower youth and foster participation and active citizenship while promoting the engagement of youth in achieving sustainable development. Moreover, youth volunteerism engagement can help in moral development and to develop pro-social behaviours that serve as protective factors against youth engaging in risky activities.

Unfortunately, declining youth participation in volunteer activities has become a worldwide issue that takes place across developed and developing countries (Adnan et al., 2022). According to a recent report by Arshad et al. (2022), youth are not motivated to volunteer, demonstrating that awareness towards volunteering activities among the youth community is still underwhelming, especially in Malaysia. Low participation in volunteering activities is not only leaving many agencies and organisations with an inability to provide the services to local communities, but also having less chance to mould youth becoming more resilient, resourceful, and responsible citizens in the society.

Similar to many other nations, Malaysia recognizes volunteering is a productive learning

process that includes the participation of workforce and intellectual assistance in contributing to the harmony and betterment of the family, society, nation, and global community society. However, a statistic revealed only 27.1% of Malaysian youths participated in volunteer activities (Arshad et al., 2022). This serves as a recognised gap within the literature documenting university students' volunteering experiences within Malaysia, to which this research contributes. To overcome the above-mentioned issue, this research is conducted to explore how university students in Malaysia are motivated to volunteer their services and what are the challenges inhibiting such behaviour. This research is one of the pioneering researches in the education sector in Malaysia, which determine the motivators and barriers of youth volunteerism towards enhancing volunteerism spirit among university students. This study serves to provide insights to boost university students' awareness on the importance of youth volunteerism. It aims to determine the motivators and barriers of youth volunteerism towards better livelihoods and improve the capability and employability as well as foster the development of social and human capital in the country.

Literature Review

Theoretical Background

A number of researchers have adopted a multidimensional approach for assessing volunteer motivation in various contexts (e.g., Clary et al., 1999; Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Knoke & Prensky, 1984; Miller, 1985). According to Knoke & Prensky (1984), they have identified volunteer motivation from the perspective of three incentive dimensions which cover utilitarian, affective, and normative. Utilitarian incentives refer to the indirect benefits from volunteering rather than the reimbursement of expenses and appreciation gifts offered by an organization. Affective incentives include interpersonal relationships which may result in positive social consequences (e.g., friendship and prestige), and normative incentives focus on altruistic and concern for others.

Caldwell and Andereck (1994) replicated the approach of Knoke and Prensky (1984) and re-conceptualised the three dimensions as purposive, solidary, and material incentives. According to them, purposive incentives for volunteering are generated from doing something meaningful and contributing to society. Solidary incentives refer to social interaction, group affiliation and identification, and networking. Material incentives are based on tangible rewards and benefits related to volunteer activities. From their study, purposive incentives were the strongest volunteer motive followed by solidary and material incentives in the context of recreation-related organisations. In addition, Williams et al. (1995) found that purposive incentives (e.g., supporting the community and the national team) were the most important motive, while material incentives (e.g., free tickets) were the least important motive in their research on a mega ski event.

As explained above, this paper adopts the multidimensional approach proposed by both Knoke and Prensky (1984) and Caldwell and Andereck (1994) for assessing volunteer motivation. The altruistic motive was based on both normative and purposive incentives; utilitarian motive and accessibility were supported by both utilitarian and material incentives while social motive comes from affective and solidary incentives.

Dependent Variable: Youth Volunteerism

Youth volunteerism is one of the increasingly popular mechanisms, for young people to bring about positive change in society, and to engage them in global peace and sustainable human development (McFadden & Smeaton, 2017). As the UN General Assembly recognises, volunteerism offers valuable opportunities for youth engagement and leadership to contribute to peaceful and inclusive societies (UNGA Resolution A/RES 67/138). Volunteering involves bringing people together to share and develop skills and resources, build capabilities and capacities, promote understanding and action and, very often, to change lives. It plays a significant influential role in the creation of social capital, a more inclusive society, a better functioning democracy, more active citizens, and an improved sense of community.

Research shows that volunteering can enhance students' academic development, personal skills development, and a sense of civic responsibility (Abdullah and Steen, 2018; Smith et al., 2010). Benefits are also associated with career choice and employability after graduation. A major motivator for young people is the opportunity to gain work-related experience, skills and qualifications that can help them in their education and careers (Eley, 2003; Fényes & Pusztai, 2012). They want to be effective and increasing employability outcomes (McFadden & Smeaton, 2017; Rehberg 2005). It is also argued that university-based volunteering enables students to apply for theoretical learning, transfer and develop skills (Buckingham-Hatfield, 2000; Podkhomutnikova, 2012) and it enables students to engage in the local community, improving knowledge and awareness of social issues (Student Voluntary England, 2006). Participating in voluntary activities contributes to the development of personality traits, such as self-confidence, sociability, conflict resolution ability, empathy, tolerance; it shows a dynamic in the development of creativity, flexibility and normative behaviour; the need for the self-development and self-improvement increases, as well as social maturity, expressed in person's values, objectives and ways of life (Borodaeva & Rudnev, 2014).

Among others, altruistic motives, commonly referred to as values-based motives, including assisting others, supporting known causes or service based on religious beliefs (Cnaan & Armroffell 1994) is one of the important factors reported in the literature. It states that some prosocial acts are motivated solely by the desire to help someone in need, and it reflects total

unselfish concern for the welfare of others (Bosci et al., 2017; Baron, Branscombe & Byrne, 2009). Handy, Hustinx, Kang, Cnaan, Brudney and Haski (2010) also found that students were more likely to volunteer when volunteering is associated with altruistic motives, rather than any other motivation type. *Independent Variable 1:*

Utilitarian

Utilitarian involves the development of new skills, professional experience, and engagement in activities designed to benefit future paid employment (Bosci et al., 2017; Cappellari & Turati, 2004; Storr and Spaij, 2017). This motive may include extrinsic, egoistic, or material factors which are based on the prospect of getting something out of the volunteering experience and include the concept of career enhancement by increasing one's human capital, acquiring new skills and knowledge (Akintola, 2011; Arshad, Kashif, Ashfaq, & Abid, 2023; Barron and Rihova, 2011; Holdsworth & Brewis, 2013).

Independent Variable 2: Social Motive

Social motive involves the building and capitalisation of social motives, including volunteering with friends, making new social contacts, or volunteering due to social pressures or rewards (Cappellari & Turati, 2024; Sahimi et al., 2018). According to Putnam (2000), social motive provides avenues for people to contribute to the common good because these networks foster norms that drive people to focus on the welfare of others. Past studies have found that people with more social ties and connections were more likely to formally volunteered (Clerkin et al., 2013; Paik & Navarre-Jackson, 2011; Taniguchi & Marshall, 2014).

Research has also shown consistently that youth with parents who volunteer was more likely to volunteer themselves (e.g., Bekkers, 2007; van Goethem, van Hoof, van Aken, Raaijmakers, Boom, & OroEo de Castro, 2012). Family influences are important because parents may transmit core values related to civic orientations to their children (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006). Friends may also be crucial to volunteering. In one study, adolescents volunteered as one way to maintain relationships (McLellan & Youniss, 2003). Overall, having social connections and knowing others who volunteer function as vehicles to volunteerism.

Independent Variable 3: Accessibility

Some empirical work suggests that volunteering is influenced by the accessibility that includes location, time, support, requirements, and cost (Pantea, 2015; Yusof et al., 2020). They may incur the opportunity costs of volunteering in terms of foregone earnings or leisure time. Indeed, some empirical work suggests that volunteer labour supply is influenced by the costs of volunteering (Pearce, 2017). If people perceive that time spent volunteering will detract from potential wages earned through labour participation, they will be less inclined to volunteer (Lee & Brudney, 2009; Mitani, 2014).

On the other hand, there are many challenges volunteers need to overcome (Willems et al., 2012; Kauthar et al., 2013). The most cited reason for stopping volunteering in the 2014 wave of the *Scottish Household Survey* is lack of time (Scottish Government, 2015), a barrier which has been found to have particular pertinence among young people (Hill, Tyson, and Bromell 2009; Rochester et al., 2010; Pye & Michelmores, 2016). In addition, Brewis et al. (2010) discovered that the lack of time, funding and opportunity are commonly cited as reasons for students not engaging in voluntary activities. Similarly, the need for students to engage in paid work during their studies and the costs incurred through unpaid work, such as travelling is also identified as

barriers to student volunteering (Brewis et al. 2010). As reported by Vezina and Crompton (2012), about two-thirds of youth aged 15 and over who had not done any formal volunteering in 2010 said that their key reasons were not having enough time (67%) and the inability to make a long-term commitment (62%) and over one-half (52%) of this group said they preferred to give dollars instead of hours. Besides, lack of recognition and support, a perceived inequity in task allocation and absence of autonomy and control were also likely to prompt young people to stop volunteering (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2011). Lack of awareness of opportunities to volunteer has also been found to be a barrier to young people's participation ((Hill et al., 2009).

More specifically, Davies (2018) in his investigation on young people volunteerism has categorised barriers into personal and attitudinal barriers, and social barriers. Lack of time due to study and employment commitments, lack of information about volunteering, not knowing how to start, lack of confidence, (Brewis et al., 2010; Lee, Morrell, Marini, & Smith, 2012; Low et al, 2007) are among the personal and attitudinal factors whilst social barriers include access to information, stereotypical or negative images about volunteering.

As indicated in the summary of research dimension in Table 1, literature that focused on personal skill development through youth volunteerism engagement tended to neglect the social motive and accessibility barrier of youth volunteerism engagement while past literature that examined social motive of youth volunteerism engagement tended to overlook personal skill development and accessibility barrier of youth volunteerism engagement. In contrast, literature that investigated the accessibility barriers of youth volunteerism engagement omitted personal skill development and desire to help someone in need in the studies. Currently, there is a lack of studies in the education sector in Asian countries, specifically, which provides holistic insights on both the motivators and barriers of youth volunteerism towards enhancing volunteerism spirit among university students.

This research overcomes research gaps in Table 1 by being one of the pioneering researches in the education sector in Malaysia, which determine the motivators and barriers of youth volunteerism towards enhancing volunteerism spirit among university students. This study serves to provide insights to boost university students' awareness on the importance of youth volunteerism

Dimension	Literature	Gap
Personal skill development through youth volunteerism engagement	Abdullah and Steen, 2018; Akintola, 2011; Barron and Rihova, 2011; Bosci et al., 2017; Buckingham-Hatfield, 2000; Cappellari & Turati, 2004; Eley, 2003; Fényes & Pusztai, 2012; McFadden & Smeaton, 2017; Podkhomutnikova, 2012; Rehberg 2005; Smith et al., 2010; Storr and Spaij, 2017.	Social motive and accessibility barrier of youth volunteerism engagement are omitted.
Desire to help someone in need through youth volunteerism engagement	Baron, Branscombe & Byrne, 2009; Bosci et al., 2017; Cnaan & Armroffell 1994; Handy et al., 2010.	Personal skill development and accessibility barrier of youth volunteerism engagement are omitted.
Social motive of youth volunteerism engagement	Bekkers, 2007; Cappellari & Turati, 2004 ; Clerkin et al., 2013; McLellan & Youniss, 2003; Paik & Navarre-Jackson, 2011; Putnam, 2000; Sahimi et al., 2018; Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006; Taniguchi & Marshall, 2014; van Goethem, van Hoof, van Aken, Raaijmakers, Boom, & OroEo de Castro, 2012.	Personal skill development and accessibility barrier of youth volunteerism engagement are omitted.
Accessibility barriers of youth volunteerism engagement	Brewis et al., 2010; Davies, 2018; Hill et al., 2009; Kauthar et al., 2013; Lee & Brudney, 2009; Lee,	Personal skill development and desire to help someone in need are omitted

	Morrell, Marini, & Smith, 2012; Low et al, 2007; Mitani, 2014; National Youth Council of Ireland, 2011; Pantea, 2015; Pearce, 2017; Rochester et al., 2010; Scottish Government, 2015; Willems et al., 2012	
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Table 1: Summary of Research Dimension and Research Gap

Methodology

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual student. A stratified random sampling method is used in the present study. The first step of stratified random sampling is to identify the four different academic programs (Engineering, Business, Arts and Humanities) offered by private universities in Malaysia. The number of student respondents selected from each program is proportional to the size of that program's student population. Using stratified random sampling with proportional allocation, the researcher selected:

Engineering: 40% of 500 = 200 students

Business: 30% of 500 = 150 students

Arts: 20% of 500 = 100 students

Humanities: 10% of 500 = 50 students

Five hundred survey questionnaires were then personally administered to the selected students in June 2019. Of the 500 questionnaires distributed, 373 questionnaires were returned and used for analysis, yielding a satisfactory response rate of 74.6%. The researchers approached the respondents face to face to administer the questionnaire. The response was optional. Of the 500 questionnaires distributed, 373 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire on spot. Participants were asked for their consent regarding participation in the survey and informed all responses remained anonymous. The profile of survey respondents is shown in Table 1.

The questionnaire consists of five sections. The first section comprises 3 questions on the demographic profiles of respondents. Section 2 is made up of 36 items on motivating volunteering behaviour, using the scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Section 3 contains 24 items on the constraints of volunteerism, using a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These questions were adopted from previous literature related to young volunteerism (Davies, 2018; Hamzah, Suandi, Shah, Ismail, and Abd Hamzah 2016; Weston et al., 2013).

Before dissemination, the questionnaire was piloted on 30 university students to check for appropriateness, readability, and comprehensiveness, particularly in the context of Malaysian youth volunteerism.

Besides, the reliability of the instrument is measured using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Since the alpha coefficients for all of the items are above 0.70 (Sekaran, 2005), it can be concluded that the reliability and face validity of the instrument supported the adequacy of measurement used in this study.

Results

Out of the 373 respondents of this study, 217 are males and 156 are females, as exhibited in Table 2. All respondents are youth aged between 15-24 years old, of which, 68.3% of them aged between 18-21 years old. Two hundred and thirty (67.3%) respondents engage in volunteering activities.

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	217	58.2
Female	156	41.8
<18	7	1.9
18-19	109	29.2
20-21	146	39.1
21 and above	111	29.8
Never	143	38.3
Less frequent	98	26.3
Sometimes	96	25.7
Frequent	27	7.2
Very frequent	9	2.4

Table 2: Demographics Information

Assessing the Measurement Model

In this section, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of all constructed in this study were verified.

Convergent Validity

The results in Table 3 show that all constructs met the threshold values of Composite reliability (CR) (0.60) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (0.50) (Hair et al., 2016), which implies strong convergent validity.

Construct	Items	Loadings (>0.5)	CR (>0.6)	AVE (>0.5)
Social Motive	SM1	0.671	0.826	0.544

(SM)	SM2	0.747		
	SM3	0.797		
	SM4	0.730		
Accessibility (ACC)	ACC1	0.661	0.723	0.596
	ACC2	0.655		
	ACC3	0.643		
	ACC4	0.551		
Altruistic (ALT)	ALT1	0.591	0.866	0.520
	ALT2	0.654		
	ALT3	0.736		
	ALT4	0.815		
	ALT5	0.752		
	ALT6	0.757		
Utilitarianism (U)	U1	0.726	0.837	0.561
	U2	0.680		
	U3	0.614		
	U4	0.671		
	U5	0.733		
	U6	0.644		
Engagement (E)	E1	0.898	0.931	0.772
	E2	0.927		
	E3	0.842		
	E4	0.844		

Table 3: Measurement Model

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is essential to ensure that the variable is internally correlated and distinct from others (Hair et al., 2016)

The discriminant validity was examined by using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of the correlations (HTMT) reflecting the average of the HTMT correlations relative to the average of the HTMT correlations (Hair et al., 2016). Table 4 shows the results of HTMT assessment indicating the sufficient discriminant validity with the highest HTMT values of 0.879, which is below the threshold value of 0.90 (Hair et al., 2016). Briefly, the measurement model provided a satisfactory construct validity.

	E	SM	ACC	ALT	U
E	0.879				
SM	0.469	0.738			
ACC	0.420	0.668	0.772		
ALT	0.586	0.701	0.612	0.721	
U	0.527	0.689	0.659	0.665	0.749

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Statistics (HTMT).

Note: Diagonals (in bold) indicate the squared root of AVE while other entries indicate correlations (SEM Output)

Multicollinearity

Since all the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values in Table 5 are lesser than 5, hence no multicollinearity problem occurred (Hair et al., 2016). Tolerance value of above 0.4 in Table 5 also indicates that the independent variable has little overlap with the other predictors. This means low or no multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2016).

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
SM	0.418	2.393
ACC	0.634	1.576
ALT	0.422	2.369
U	0.462	2.125

Table 5: Collinearity Statistics

Dependent Variable: Engagement

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Construct

Table 6 assessed the construct's goodness-of-fit through SEM analysis. The model is adequately fit as it met the requirements of fit indices (RMSEA= 0.059, CFI= 0.933, TLI= 0.926, Chi-Square/df=2.276). Kline (2005, 2016) suggested that at a minimum, the indices such as chi-square, RMSEA, CFI should be reported. Due to the large sample size of n=373, which is greater than n=200, model chi-square is not applicable.

Indices	Model Fit Statistics	Evaluation Criteria
<i>Absolute Fit</i>		
Root Mean Squared Error of	0.059	RMSEA<0.08

Approximation (RMSEA)		
<i>Incremental Fit</i>		
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.933	CFI>0.9
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.926	TLI>0.9
<i>Parsimonious fit</i>		
Chi-Square/ df	2.276	$\chi^2/df < 3.0$

Table 6: Overall, Goodness-of-fit (GoF)

(Source: SEM Output)

Assessing Structural Effect on Individual Paths

H1: Social motive significantly affects youth volunteerism engagement.

The result in Table 7 shows $\beta=0.038$ and $p=0.474$, indicating social motive has an insignificant impact on youth volunteerism engagement. Hence, H1 is not supported.

H2: Accessibility significantly affects youth volunteerism engagement.

The result indicates $\beta=0.113$ and $p=0.049$, implying accessibility has a positive and significant impact on youth volunteerism engagement. Therefore, H2 is supported.

H3: Altruistic significantly affects youth volunteerism engagement.

The findings showed $\beta=0.446$ and $p<0.001$, indicating altruistic has a positive and significant impact on youth volunteerism engagement. Thus, H3 is supported.

H4: Utilitarianism significantly affects youth volunteerism engagement.

The result indicated $\beta=0.162$ and $p=0.003$, showing that utilitarianism has a positive and significant impact on youth volunteerism engagement. Therefore, H4 is supported.

The multiple correlation (R^2) is 0.439, this explained 43.9% of the variance in engagement is contributed by the volunteerism factors. The R^2 values of 0.439 is above the 0.26 value is suggested by Cohen (1988) which indicates a substantial model.

Hypothesis	Structural Path	b	SE	β	p
H1	Social Motive → Engagement	.050	.070	.038	.474
H2	Accessibility → Engagement	.138	.070	.113	.049
H3	Altruistic → Engagement	.519	.066	.446	<0.001
H4	Utilitarianism → Engagement	.206	.069	.162	.003
		R^2	E	0.439	

Table 7: Structural Path Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Discussion and Implications

Altruistic

First important finding of this research reveals that altruistic attitudes and behaviours play the most significant role in driving youth engagement in volunteering activities in Malaysia. Altruistic attitudes and behaviors are characterized by selflessness, concern for others, and a desire to contribute positively to society, are key motivators that inspire youth in Malaysia to participate in volunteer work. Youth in Malaysia has a strong societal-oriented concern or compassion towards the welfare of poor and needy people in the society that motivate them to participate actively in the society (Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroder, & Penner, 2017). Youth volunteerism in Malaysia began with individuals' commitment to charitable altruistic towards human tragedies due to wars, political conflicts, and economic crisis (Stocks, Lishner., & Decker, 2009). Youth who join volunteering activities is willing to devote a significant portion of their time and to serve and contribute to the underprivileged groups in society (Gibbs, 2019). Their altruistic behaviour is not motivated by the expectation of external rewards or avoiding external punishment. Altruistic in youth volunteerism must involve good action, good intentions, and well-meaning goal to help another and to increase helper's satisfaction. Youth in Malaysia who becomes a volunteer, normally, does not receive any payment for the work that he or she does. Youth volunteerism, by its very nature, is altruistic (Batson, 2011). Youth who actively engage in volunteering activities in this study perceive volunteering activities as a worthy cause, which offers them an opportunity to express their humanitarian concerns towards of people in need in the society to translate the moral values and belief that they acquire from the traditional classroom and religious classes into actual actions. Downward, Hallmann and Rasciute (2020) find that altruistic is pervasive to volunteerism among youth that more than one-third of youth are likely to continue their volunteer services to a non-profit organisation for a longer period of because they want to serve the community or help those that are less fortunate organization. Altruistic youth who actively engage in volunteerism activity has strong mental health due to their vital involvement to help the needy people in the society Kauthar et al. (2013) through charity work. Meaningful civic engagement through volunteering enhances their mental health and improves their ability to cope with stress and adversity in life (Wymer and Akbar, 2019). In a multicultural society like Malaysia, altruistic attitudes and behaviors among youth can help bridge divides between different ethnic, religious, and social groups. Youth who engage in volunteerism activity often do so with the intention of promoting social harmony and understanding, thereby contributing to greater social cohesion. The finding of this study indicates that for Malaysian youth, altruism is tied to a sense of patriotism and pride in their country. Youth volunteer because they want to contribute to the betterment of Malaysia and help it achieve its national goals, such as reducing poverty, improving education, or promoting environmental sustainability.

Utilitarianism

On top of altruistic, this study also discovers that utilitarianism is the second important factor that plays an important role in affecting youth volunteerism engagement. On the viewpoint of the youth respondents in this study, volunteerism is especially important for developing deeper concern in a collectivist nation such as Malaysia to maximise the positive change in the life of underprivileged people in the society. In a multiracial society like Malaysia, this finding shows that utilitarianism is especially important in encouraging youth to volunteer in activities that

benefit diverse communities, regardless of ethnic or cultural differences. By focusing on the overall well-being of society, to engage in activities that promote social harmony, youth in Malaysia can maximise positive change to the national unity of Malaysia.

Many universities in Malaysia have introduced social service courses as part of the academic program to generate greater youth volunteerism engagement outside the traditional classroom to provide students with experiences and opportunities to contribute knowledge they learn to benefit the needy people in the society. Public university's application review boards in Malaysia often consider high school volunteer experiences as one of the important credentials for a student to enter the matriculation program. Youth volunteerism is currently embedded in the tertiary education system and is continuing to be an important part of Malaysian culture to encourage youth who are in the age of 15-24 years old to perform morally right action to maximise pleasure or well-being or minimise the suffering of underprivileged groups in the society.

On top of that, utilitarianism also contributes positively to the prolonged human development of the youth. Positive reciprocal interactions with society through volunteerism activity can nourish positive and healthy development. Active participation in volunteering activities that benefit the nation, and society contributes to higher academic achievement, less disciplinary behaviours because utilitarianism stimulates confidence, love, and care to the society among youth in Malaysia (Bowers, Li, Kiely, Brittan, Lerner, & Lerner, 2011). Utilitarianism supports volunteering in areas that enhance public health and safety, which are critical in building a diverse Malaysia society. When youth are motivated to engage in activities like public health campaigns or social activities that address poverty or drug abuse, this will contribute greatly to the long-term well-being of the Malaysian society.

Accessibility

Accessibility is another important factor that motivates youth volunteerism in Malaysia. Youth in Malaysia has accessibility to volunteering activities through school, family, and church, which serves as key agents that encourage and promote youth volunteering through informative resources of volunteerism (Ottoni-Wilhelm, Estell, & Perdue, 2014).

Ensuring that volunteer opportunities are accessible to all young people, regardless of their background, is key to promoting inclusivity in multi-racial communities in Malaysia.

In a multiracial society like Malaysia, it is important to offer volunteer opportunities that are culturally sensitive and available in multiple languages. This ensures that youth from different ethnic backgrounds feel comfortable and included in the volunteerism activities. By providing materials and communication in the major languages spoken in Malaysia (Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, and English), it makes volunteering more accessible to youth. Besides that, organisations and community members can also pass volunteerism information onto youth through word of mouth, exhibition, online portals, and seminars. Youth who have multiple access to volunteerism information invest more hours in volunteering activities. Volunteers who have greater access to information tend to make a more in-depth assessment of the costs and benefits of volunteerism when deciding whether to volunteer or not. Specifically, information accessibility ensures that youth will reap the benefits of volunteerism if everybody in the organisation collectively contributes and updates the information. This finding supports a positive association between youth volunteerism with resource accessibility. This study discovers that accessibility to interpersonal skill (assisting patients and teamwork) and technical skill (planning and budgeting) is important in determining the engagement of volunteering activities among Malaysian youth.

Youth volunteer will be more engaged in volunteering activities if he or she is given the opportunity to decide in a team and learn how to conduct activities in a more organised and efficient manner.

Abdullah, Nur Aishah, Suand, and Ismail (2018) found that youth volunteerism practised in Malaysia nowadays is improved from before because concerted efforts have been made by various parties, including the government and non-governmental organisations to disseminate information and skill of volunteerism to the youth in Malaysia. The government of Malaysia is emphasising on the youth volunteerism by providing a conducive educational resource for young people to learn and participate as well as to be creative and innovative through constant training and guidance (Tiraieyari & Krauss, 2018). Greater accessibility to the facilities and promotion from the volunteer organisation manage to attract more young volunteers to engage in volunteering activities.

This study highlights an especially important finding that altruistic, utilitarianism and accessibility are especially important in attracting youth to participate in volunteering activities compared to the social motive of boosting employability, forging new friendships and creating social networks. Volunteering activities are of charitable course in a collectivist nation such as Malaysia that young volunteer put the societal benefits on top of the personal rewards. Volunteering activities are perceived to have enabled youth volunteers to develop transversal and soft skills, which might be useful in helping others, and contribute to society. One way of acquiring soft skills is by volunteering with associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Many university students develop transversal skills or soft skills linked to their future professional career, that they reflect on this consciously and feel enriched by the experience through volunteerism. Volunteering can be actively incorporated into the university students' learning process, making their overall experience of higher education more active, enjoyable, and relevant. Learning through action is the most important aspect of youth volunteerism engagement in the acquisition of transversal and soft skills, which go beyond knowledge to help university students to easily get on with changing environments in any sector, position and also in personal life. Through volunteerism engagement, youth will be exposed to more opportunity and capacity to develop and complete tasks and projects in a group. This will help them to socially relate in different contexts through close social collaboration and sharing. A youth who is equipped with worked transversal and soft skills will have better salary expectations after graduating from the university. Volunteerism engagement will prepare youth to adapt more quickly in the labour with optimal interpersonal communication and the capacity to solve conflicts and high commitment to the project and responsibility.

Given the enormous benefits of volunteerism engagement in personal and career development, Malaysia universities should incorporate volunteerism engagement within the curriculum so that students at all levels can develop cooperation, empathy, citizenship, and self-esteem. Current Education Act should be amended to mandate graduation requirements that emphasise the application of volunteerism work and learning. These volunteerism work and learning can take the form of involvement in a community agency or community event, or a sustained relationship with a particular service organisation to serve the community. Students should be required to enrol in a formal volunteerism class in addition to spending a certain number of hours in a social service commitment.

Contribution Of Research, Recommendation and Direction for Future Study

The present study focuses on identifying youth volunteer motivational factors in Malaysia.

Given the enormous contribution of youth volunteers in Malaysia, a greater understanding of volunteer motivations is imperative for the Malaysian government and non-governmental organisations to develop effective volunteer recruitment and retention strategies.

The present study adds up to the youth volunteerism literature by identifying altruistic, utilitarianism and accessibility as the important motivation factors for youth to join volunteering activities. As Abdullah, Nur Aishah, Suand, and Ismail (2018) argued that youth volunteerism in Malaysia has yet to prove to be an important aspect in the development of the country, this study is one of the pioneer studies that contribute to the scarce literature on Malaysian youth participation in volunteer activities. This study has an especially important discovery that the altruistic, utilitarianism and accessibility are more important in attracting youth to participate in volunteering activities compared to the social motive of boosting employability, forging new friendships and creating social networks. This finding is especially important to cultivate a spirit of enhancing personal values through helping people in needs in society by boosting youth involvement in voluntary work so that more education and awareness programme can be conducted nationwide to fulfil the psychological needs to attract youth to participate in volunteer work. By engaging in volunteer activities, youth gain valuable experience in areas such as teamwork, problem-solving, and communication. This helps the Malaysian government, public and private sectors to build a skilled and adaptable workforce that is essential for the country's long-term economic growth and competitiveness. Youth volunteers can help fill gaps in public services, particularly in areas like education, healthcare, environmental protection, and social welfare. By supplementing the efforts of government agencies, volunteers reduce the fiscal burden on public resources, allowing the government to allocate funds and manpower more effectively.

This finding makes a significant contribution to the existing volunteerism theory by highlighting that altruistic, utilitarianism and accessibility are far more important than the self-social interest in promoting youth volunteerism. Through volunteerism activities, youth from various backgrounds can work together towards common goals to address pressing social issues such as poverty, education inequality and public health challenges. This contributes to the government's efforts to promote national unity by fostering mutual understanding and respect in Malaysia. In addition, the findings of this study will also benefit volunteer organisations because they could tailor their promotions to invite more youth volunteers to participate in volunteering projects by emphasising on the psychological needs rather than social motives. This study provides a platform for appreciating youth participation in the volunteering activities so that more focus will be the focus on providing facilitating resources and intrinsic satisfaction than monetary rewards.

Direction for Future Research

It would be beneficial to conduct in-depth interviews in the near future to discover more details about how information richness motivates youths to volunteer in the volunteering activities. Representatives from the Ministry of Youth and Sports could be interviewed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of their views on youth volunteerism. More future research could also be conducted to shed light on how volunteer organisations can collaborate with school administrators to develop measures to influence and encourage the youth to join volunteering activities. It is recommended that the age of youth in Malaysia be narrowed down to 15 to 25 like some other countries as suggested by the United Nation. For example, in Bangladesh, people with age years old like Brunei and India so that more youth volunteerism could be promoted in

secondary schools, colleges and universities. Comprehensive governmental policy is needed to motivate youth in this country to be involved in volunteering activities to contribute to better community development in the country.

Realising youth volunteerism in Malaysia is vital to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this developing nation. As youth volunteerism is a right protected by the Convention on the Rights Child, which assures the youth's right to participate in volunteering activities. The Malaysian government and non-governmental agencies should put in greater effort to create a supportive environment for volunteering engagement of youth, which can be achieved through cultivating altruistic and utilitarianism awareness. Through active volunteerism engagement, youth can thus be moulded into active leaders, who are better prepared for responsible adulthood.

Ethical Approval

Research Ethics Committee at Multimedia University, with the approval number EA3022021.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest

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